

## Girl's Night by orphan\_account

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**Language:** English

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**Summary:**

Will and the girls have a sleepover. Richie gate crashes. (Oneshot)

Chapters to follow are all separate oneshots

# 1. Chapter 1

## Author's Note:

I'm going to post all the Ryers drabbles from my tumblr here, too, if they're not absolutely shit. The AO3 Ryers tag needs love yall

Friday night always found El, Bev and Max curled up in blankets at the Byers house. It was tradition for the three of them to come together each week for a sort of girls night, where they could take a break from some of the rowdiness of the whole group and watch cheesy movies together. Somehow, Will had found himself an unwitting participant of girls night. A few weeks back, he'd stayed home from the "boys night" equivalent that was held at Mikes each Friday because he'd been sick. Instead of being allowed to wallow in self pity, he'd found himself dragged out, swathed in blankets, to watch a trashy romcom with the three girls. He'd been surprised to realise that he much preferred the calm quiet of girls night and had since become a regular attendee.

El liked to paint his nails different colours each week and tonight had chosen a sparkly blue shade. Will smiled to watch her do it, her brow furrowed and her tongue poked out in concentration. Bev stretched out next to him and shoved her feet into his lap.

"Careful!" El cautioned as Will's hands were jolted by the movement. "You nearly made me smudge it."

"Sorry" Bev said lazily and then grinned at Will. It was her mischievous, evil grin. "So, Will, Richie looked pretty cute today, huh?"

Bev's usual victim of choice to talk about crushes with was Will, seeing as all Max and El did was gush over their respective boyfriends. Plus, she'd figured out his ridiculous, enormous,

embarrassing crush on Richie on day one, seconds after they'd met.

"Yes! Okay, Bev?" Will admitted with a groan, hanging his head. "He looked so good today and I'm a mess." Bev laughed and wriggled her toes at him.

"Just ask him out then," she said simply and Will looked at her in disbelief.

"I can't just ask him out!" Will said, scandalised "He's...he's Richie! With his hair and his face and his hair!" Will looked at her desperately, unsure if he was silently requesting for advice or some sort of solution, but Bev just laughed at him again. Max snorted and burrowed deeper into her blanket.

"We get it. You're useless around the love of your life, it's adorably pathetic."

"The love of who's life?" Came a voice and they all jumped to see Richie standing in the doorway.

"Will's." Bev answered him, promptly, and Will smacked her with a cushion, his face burning. El scolded him and she quickly grabbed his hand to check for smudging. Richie lit up with delight and Will mentally prepared himself for a night of teasing and embarrassment. Then Richie seemed to properly take in the scene in front of him. He looked between the four of them, did a brief double-take at the flower crown perched on Will's head, and glanced at the bottles of nail varnish everywhere.

"Am I interrupting something?" Richie asked amusedly, distracted by the cute, pink flush of Will's cheeks.

"Yes. Girls' night." Max said, lazily, from where she was lying on the

floor and Richie nodded. His gaze lingered on Will, who refused to meet his eyes. El was frowning.

“Did you come in through the window again?” She demanded and Richie shrugged, unrepentant.

“I wanted to cuddle with dear William, but he was missing at Mike’s and the gang hadn’t seen him. So I went looking for him. Turns out you’ve all stolen him!” He stabbed his finger toward them accusingly.

All three girls exchanged calculating looks and Will felt his stomach sink. Oh god.

“He’s all yours, Richie!” El said, smiling sweetly at Will, who looked ready to murder her. Bev shoved Will off of the couch and Richie immediately bounded over to help him to his feet. In the process, their hands became intertwined. Richie stared down at their joined hands, almost in awe, and when Will finally noticed he was gripping onto Richies hand, tightly, he quickly let go as if burned, covering up the incident with an awkward cough.

Max smothered a laugh and Will glared at her. He genuinely liked girls night, he was gonna miss the movie and he was pissed. And also, cuddling with Richie?! He was so, so screwed. Being in the slightest proximity to Richie these days made him a bumbling, stuttering mess. He looked pleadingly at Bev, hoping she’d rescue him. Instead, the red-head just mouthed “Go for it” with a wink and Will knew it was a lost cause. In a daze, he allowed Richie to drag him to his room.

Once the door had closed, Richie rounded on him.

“Who’s the love of your life, then?” Richie asked teasingly. Will gaped at him, lost for words. It didn’t help that Richie looked extremely pretty tonight. It scrambled his brain and what little was

left of his concentration.

“Uh..um the girls w-were just... we were joking?” He tried feebly and Richie stepped closer.

“Why have you been avoiding me Will?” Richie asked and Will swallowed. Will hadn’t been deliberately avoiding him, they still hung out as a group. He’d just been conveniently busy whenever Richie wanted to hang out, just the two of them. He just couldn’t trust himself around Richie, to be completely honest.

Richie had moved and he was close now. Too close. And Will couldn’t remember how to move. Or breathe. Was it hot in here? It felt hot.

“I-I’m not! I mean...” Will protested weakly. Long fingers touched Will’s face and he flinched automatically. He turned and met Richie’s eyes, inches from his own. When had that happened? They were warm, brown and safe. Will stared into them, helplessly.

“Do you like me Will?” Richie asked, casually, as if asking about the weather. Will spluttered.

“What?” He demanded, convinced his heart had actually stopped beating for a second. Richie smiled, gently. More gentle than Will had ever seen him. It made him a little breathless.

“Do you like me?” Richie repeated and Will just looked at him, slightly hurt and embarrassed. The silence was telling enough and Will felt utterly ridiculous, standing in front of his crush in a fluffy blanket and a flower crown. But there was something vulnerable about the way Richie was looking at him, guarded under his easy smile, that made Will reach for a tendril of confidence and speak up.

“Yes.” Will admitted in a whisper and Richie grinned, lighting up like a Christmas tree, before bending down and pressing his lips to Will’s. Will let out a muffled yelp of surprise but Richie didn’t relent and held Will against him with a hand on his hip, his mouth hard and persistent against Will’s. His brain was going at about a mile a minute and he finally leaned up on his tiptoes to kiss back, fully aware that his poor heart was moments away from exploding. He felt large hands come up to cradle his face and he melted, lost in the feeling of hot, slightly clumsy kisses, Richie’s chapped lips, the callouses of his fingers.

Richie pulled back and they broke apart. Will followed him automatically, chasing his lips and then blushed deeply. Richie grinned.

“This means I like you too, Willy bob.” He said, kissing Will on the forehead. Will ducked his head shyly and glanced back up at Richie through long eyelashes. Cute.

“You do?” Will asked, breathlessly.

“Since I first met you. You were adorable.” Richie confirmed, teasing. Will blushed even redder, the flush spreading down to his neck, and Richie stared, fascinated. He’d done that.

“You still wanna watch a movie with the girls? We could cuddle?” Richie asked, nervous all of a sudden and unsure where they stood. Will shook his head.

“No.” He said, with a deep breath. “I can think of something better.” And he pulled Richie back in to meet him.

Outside Will's room, the girls pulled away from where they'd been crouched, ears pressed to the door. They all exchanged grins and silent high-fives, feeling pretty self-congratulatory.

"Finally." Max whispered. "If Will had talked about Richie's hair one more time, I swear I was gonna murder him."

Bev folded her arms smugly.

"Aren't you glad that I told Richie that Will liked him and made him come over?" She said, proud of her match-making skills. El rolled her eyes.

"Yes, well done Bev. Don't feel too smug when they're all over each other next girls night." El pointed out.

"They're gonna be the grossest couple ever." Max said, her nose wrinkled. They all stared at each other in dawning horror. Will and Richie were going to be sickeningly adorable together. What had they done?

"Shit" said Bev. "Shit shit shit"

## 2. Richie Wheeler

### Summary for the Chapter:

One shot for the prompt of jealousy, with Mike and Richie as twins! (Also Will is in the Losers club, and isn't in the Party)

“Yo, William, where were you yesterday?” Richie asked, leaning casually against the locker next to Will. Will jumped, even though Richie appeared out of nowhere in the same way, everyday, and Richie snickered. He was too easy. Will huffed and whacked him with one of his textbooks, but he was smiling.

“I was with Mike, actually,” Will said, quietly, sliding the books into his bag. “You know we have that joint assignment?”

Richie gaped. Mike liked Richie’s friends, sure, but their groups never really interacted. Mike claimed he didn’t want to be associated with the reputation of the Losers Club, (*“Reputation of being the coolest.” Richie had said proudly. “No, reputation of being a dumbass.” Mike had replied*) and Richie claimed that he never wanted to hang out with Mike’s “boring, nerd group”. As far as Richie knew, Mike and Will only spoke in places they couldn’t avoid, like at the Wheeler home or if they got paired up in class. In fact, Mike and Richie hadn’t had the same friends or been part of the same friendship group since kindergarten.

“You were hanging out with my brother?” Richie said, incredulously. “On purpose?!”

“Yes, on purpose, Rich.” Will laughed but he ducked his head and avoided Richie’s gaze. Okay, hold up. Was he blushing? Richie peered down at Will, frowning.



“You have fun?” Richie asked, deliberately casual, and Will looked up at him. He was definitely blushing. What the fuck?

“So much fun,” Will replied and Richie felt his stomach constrict painfully. “You know how much I love giving presentations and analysing poetry.” He finished, sarcastically, and Richie’s shoulders slumped, a wave of relief passing over him. He laughed at himself inwardly.

*Get a grip*, he told himself sternly, *It’s just a work project*.

He was not losing his best friend to Mike, he wasn’t. He felt something nudge his shoulder and he broke out from his thoughts. Will was looking at him, curiously.

“You alright?” Will asked and Richie quickly pasted on a bright grin.

“Oh, yeah, just thinking of poetry...and which love poem to give to your Mom.” He answered.

It wasn’t his best work, he was usually far more graphic with his Mom jokes, but Will laughed dutifully. Richie smiled down at him, fondly, and slung an arm around Will’s shoulders.

“Come on, let’s get to class before Eddie has a conniption and assumes you’ve been beaten up in the hall.” Will groaned in embarrassment but let Richie tug him along.

“He’s so protective. We’re the same height! He can’t exactly protect me.” Will complained and Richie laughed.

“You can handle yourself.” Richie agreed and was rewarded with an especially soft smile. It was a good day.

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Richie wouldn't have given the Mike situation any more thought, except it started to happen all the time. Will began to ditch the Losers at lunch, blew off their attempts to hang out after school and once, memorably, cancelled a trip to the movies with Richie. He *never* missed out on movie night.

The second week of Will ditching them at lunch, Richie caught him by the wrist as he made to rush off.

"Hey, William, my love, what's the rush?" Richie whined and Will flushed deep to the roots of his hair. The Losers all looked over as one and Will cowed under their stares a little.

"Hey guys," Bev greeted cheerfully, interrupting, as she swung her tray of food down. "Oh hey, Will! Long time, no see. Where were you Tuesday? Games night is sacred."

Will bit his lip and Richie frowned in concern, staring at him searchingly. Will wouldn't meet his eyes.

"Sorry, guys," he said, sounding flustered but genuine. "I've gotta get this English project finished." He eased his hand out of Richie's, gently.

"I'll see you later?" He gave an awkward wave and hurried off and they all watched him walk away, Bev with her eyebrows raised.

"One hell of an English project," Ben said, slowly. "What's it been, two weeks?"

"Yeah," Bev said, with a smirk "Maybe they're not just studying in the library, if you catch my drift."

"Studying each other." Eddie snickered and they laughed. Except

Richie.

“Shut up, guys, that’s my brother and my best friend. So gross.” He joked, feebly, but he sounded hollow. The Losers exchanged significant looks.

“Well, let’s hope he doesn’t bail on us for the Snow Ball.” Eddie said and the Losers hummed in agreement. The Losers *owned* dances, and they always managed to sneak Mike in, too. It was fun, and usually the highlight of their year.

“I think he already has a date,” Richie said, bitterly, and they all fell silent. Bill patted Richie’s arm, in sympathy, and they quickly changed the subject, but Richie’s voice was conspicuously absent from the conversation. He stared at the empty spot where Will usually sat, moodily, and they all tactfully allowed him to brood.

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Later that night, Richie lay on his bed in their shared room whilst Mike worked at his desk quietly. Richie was being oddly silent, and he could tell that Mike found it strange, judging from the glances that were inconspicuously shot his way every few minutes.

“Do you like Will?” Richie suddenly burst out, unable to stop himself. Mike gave him a weird look over his shoulder.

“No, Rich, I completely hate Will. The way he’s always so loud and rude and self centred. He’s the worst.” Mike said, sarcastically, turning back to his homework with a roll of his eyes.

“No, dipshit, I mean do you like Will? As in, like like.” At that, Mike

laughed, loudly, and then immediately stopped at the pained expression on Richie's face. He frowned.

"Wait," Mike said, slowly. "You're serious?" Richie nodded emphatically, twisting his fingers together.

"I think Will has a crush on you, dude, he gets so nervous talking about you," he said, rambling with forced nonchalance. "And he's my best friend, so I gotta know your intentions. The big brother talk and all."

"I'm older." Mike pointed out automatically.

"I'm taller." Richie shot back easily, with a grin. Mike resisted the urge to stick his tongue out in retaliation. Instead, he folded his arms and shook his head with a small, exasperated smile.

"Will doesn't have a crush on me, Richie." Mike said matter-of-factly.

"He does! He hangs out with you now and he never wanted to before! Probably because he was too nervous. But then there was the English project, and now he's in love with you, and you have to promise not to break his heart and to treat him like a gentlemen or I'll have to kill you. And I don't want to kill you, because you're my little brother, and your death might emotionally traumatise me." Richie said, dramatically.

Mike's gaze became increasingly more incredulous, fixed on a wildly gesticulating Richie. He arched a disbelieving eyebrow.

"Hang on, are you jealous?" Mike asked and Richie spluttered, mid-sentence.

“What?” He practically screeched. “Jealous? Of what?”

Mike smirked.

“You *are* jealous.” He said in a sing-song voice. “You’re jealous, because of Will! *You* have a crush on Will!”

Richie glared at him.

“Am not! I do not!” He said petulantly, with a pout, and Mike laughed again. He put down his pen and came over to sit on his bed, facing Richie. Richie tried to keep glaring, but Mike was always so damn sincere. He groaned and looked away, flopping down onto the bed, and his head hit the cushions with a satisfying thunk. Mike looked down at him, pityingly, and then sighed.

“Okay, Will is probably going to kill me for ruining the surprise, but I’ll put you out of your misery.” Mike said and Richie sat up quickly, squinting at Mike suspiciously.

“There is no English Project,” Mike admitted and Richie pointed at him triumphantly.

“Hah! I knew it! Will was lying!” He declared, even as his stomach sank. He leaned towards Mike with narrowed eyes.

“You’re in a secret relationship!” He accused, jabbing his finger in the air for emphasis. Mike snorted.

“No. Let me finish.” He said, impatiently. “Will lied, yes, but that’s because he was asking me for advice. Advice on how to ask you out, Rich.” Richie blinked at him dumbly, his brow furrowed in confusion.

“What?”

“He wanted to ask you to the Snow Ball. With the whole sign thing and flowers and romance. All the clichés,” Mike explained, “But he wanted my help sneaking it past Mom and Dad, organising couple photos and stuff because...well, you know.” Mike finished, awkwardly.

Richie nodded, absently. Yeah, their parents were homophobic assholes. What was new? Richie’s head was making weird static noises; he felt like he was underwater.

“So there, you dummy. Nothing to be jealous about. Will likes you, not me.”

Richie stared at him, dazed.

“You’re serious?” He croaked out and Mike refrained from laughing at him. Instead he reached out and linked his pinky with Richie’s, something they hadn’t done since they were kids.

“Deadly serious.” He said, smiling. “Pinky promise.” Richie giggled weakly and shook his hand with Mike’s, still looking half delirious with shock. He’s shook his head as if to clear it, and stood up abruptly.

“Well shit,” He declared with a giddy smile. “Guess I was being pretty stupid, huh?” Mike moved too, but back towards his homework. The nerd.

“What’s new there?” Mike muttered “You’re always stupid.” But Richie pretended not to hear.

“I must leave!” He cried “I must confess my love to my dearest

William, and claim his affections.” He ran to the window and swung his legs over the edge.

“Just use the-“ The window slammed shut and Mike sighed. “Door.” He finished, needlessly. He stared at the window for a moment and wondered how much damage an angry, lovesick, ninety pound Will Byers could do, once he realised that Mike had outed his secret and ruined the surprise. Probably a lot of damage, Mike thought, thinking of the painfully glittery sign they’d spent hours on, that asked Richie to the dance, the balloons and the flowers, and the car Will had saved up for. He winced to himself. *Oops*. Mike shrugged and turned back to his math work. Richie would protect him.

### 3. Chapter 3

#### Summary for the Chapter:

Some Angst was requested so I tried my best,  
originally posted to my tumblr, Oedipus-Tozier

On Monday, close to the sixth month anniversary of his possession, Will disappears for an entire day. Richie ditches school the moment he gets a glimpse of Will's empty desk and heads for his truck, heart trapped in his throat. He drives around the streets and starts his search, trying to be as logical and methodical about it as he can manage in his panicked state.

Castle Byers is out, he knows; Will noticeably avoids his old hideout. Bad memories haunt a fair few of Will's favourite places, these days. Richie racks his brain. The arcade would be too noisy; the stores full of too many people. The library was out- the librarian of Hawkins was notoriously nosey- and Mirkwood was clearly out of the question. In the end, Richie scours the town twice, spends another fraught hour comforting a distressed Joyce Byers, and nearly uses up half a tank of gas before he finds him. In his own house, casa de Tozier: Richie's bedroom. He could laugh.

Will is in his bed, curled up in one of Richie's hoodies. There's a sketchbook on his lap and he's sketching furiously, as if his life depends on this one drawing.

A distraction, Richie thinks, his eyes tracing the tense lines of Will's shoulders and the worrying jut of his collar bone.

"Will," he says softly, and he hates the way his voice sounds, like he's talking to a skittish animal and not a person. This is his boyfriend for fucks sake.

Will startles and looks up, eyes wide and owlsh.

"Richie?" he says and he sounds shocked, as if Richie is the one who's intruding. Richie swallows, wills his hands to steady, and pushes down his simmering worry and frustration.



"I was worried." He says and Will looks immediately guilty and suitably chastised. He even pouts a little, for crying out loud.

"Sorry Richie," Will says, avoiding his eyes and twisting his hand around his pencil "it's just today- school, I-

"I know baby," Richie interrupts soothingly and he's hurting so much for Will but. But. The overwhelming worry is there, still, just a little. He still feels as if he's just run a marathon and there's ice in his veins. "Just tell someone next time? Especially your Mom, she was worried."

Especially me, I was worried. You worry me. He thinks but he doesn't say it. He just sits next to Will instead and launches into a joke; cracks an obnoxious smile and coaxes a timid laugh out of him.

On Wednesday, Will has an anxiety attack. His breath turns short and sharp, suddenly, and Richie knows immediately what's about to happen when he follows Will's gaze and finds it locked on the lamp of the AV table. It's small, innocuous and yet screamingly obvious. A stark reminder of everything that had transpired there and that day. Will's eyes go rounder than usual and Richie excuses them both, quickly. They end up in a random bathroom, and Richie spends half an hour murmuring into Will's hair as he trembles in his arms, until the Party manage to find them.

"Bill Will, William, light of my life," he says later on, as they're lying in Will's bed. "Please talk to someone. I know you're hurting."

Will hides his face in Richie's shoulder and feigns sleep. Richie sighs.

"Sweetheart. You don't have to do this alone." He whispers into the darkness. Silence meets his words and it's stifling.

They argue the next morning, piling into the truck together. Richie is driving, careful and cool as a cucumber, he swears, but he can spare the odd glance towards his boyfriend. He's just concerned. He tentatively brings up the idea of taking to someone once more.

“Sooooooo...” He says with complete nonchalance. He’s casual, he’s cool, everything is peachy. “Did you think about what I said? You know, like, talking to someone?” Will tenses, in the seat next to him.

“Shit, fuck, that was insensitive,” Richie curses, tightening his grip on his steering wheel “I just mean, have you thought about talking to the school counsellor? Or the doctors up at the lab?”

“Richie,” Will says, and a warning tone interlaces with his usual genetleness. Richie glances at him, again. His back is ramrod straight.

“Sorry, sorry, I know,” He apologises “I’m just worried. I don’t know if I can help you with this, and I wish you had support baby,”

That goes down like a lead balloon.

“No-one can help, Richie I’m a ‘unique case’, remember?” Will says, mockingly. He references his old lab medical reports with complete derision. The doctors and therapists at the Lab are really good now, Richie and Jane can attest to that. They’re regular visitors. But Will refuses to trust any doctor or authority figure, these days. And his past experiences there, well.

“Really quite unusual, a one-of-a-kind anomaly!” Will is still ranting, but he loses his momentum as they near Hawkins High, and he slumps.

“A complete nut job, in plain terms.” He mutters.

They’ve reached the school, Richie swings into their usual spot. He puts on the handbrake.

“You’re not a nut job.” He says, fiercely, turning to face Will. “You’re just suffering. You’re allowed to suffer after trauma. But you’re also allowed to let people help you.”

“Well thank you for the permission,” Will says with a roll of his eyes.

Will’s out of the car before Richie has even registered that he’d undone his seat belt, slipping out of his seat with a grace he usually lacked.

“Stop mothering me, Richie. If I need help, I’ll ask, okay?” And wow, okay, Richie hasn’t seen Will mad at him like this, well, ever.

“You’re worse than Mike.” Will says, angrily and with that parting shot, he leaves. Richie scowls and drops his head to the steering wheel with a dull thunk. Low blow.

They fix it on the Friday, neither used to arguing like this. Will is stubborn by nature, but it’s usually impossible for him to be mean. And Richie is what he knows best when upset: persistently obnoxious, infuriatingly persistent, and a weird blend of apologetic, heartfelt, jokey and blunt.

Will breaks first, and so Friday morning finds Will sobbing in Richie’s arms once again. Richie holds him tight, cursing the fucking supernatural, the government and their ruined childhoods.

“Baby,” he says into Will’s hair “You don’t have to do anything you don’t wanna do. I’m sorry for pushing.”

Will sniffs.

“I’m not brave like you, Richie,” he mutters into his chest.

“Bullshit.” Richie says abruptly, and then softer: “You’re the bravest person I know. Except from Jane, maybe. Or Big Bill.”

Will huffs a laugh against him and Richie grins slightly. Score one to Tozier.

He bites his lip.

“Look, I wasn’t brave about therapy. I only went because half the Losers did, because my parents were paying, and because this town fucked me up good.”

Will nods slowly and Richie decides to just keep talking and see, as usual, where it gets him.

“We defeated It. Demagorgons. If I made it out alive, I’m sure as shit not letting them ruin my life any more. They don’t get to win. ”

Richie says. "That's why I'm in therapy. Why Jane is, Mike, Bev. The Bad Men don't get to win."

Will looks up at him. He looks terrified. Richie traces the line of his shoulders and sweeps his hand up and down his spine, reassuringly.

Will swallows. "I don't want them to win, either."

Richie drops a kiss to his forehead.

"They won't," He promises and Will sighs, melting into his hold.

"Can you ring the lab for me?" He mumbles and Richie smiles and holds him tighter, giving him a gentle squeeze.

"Okay." He says and Will sighs again "Okay."

He tucks a finger under Will's chin and tilts his head upwards. He kisses his nose, his mouth, and then rests his forehead against Will's.

"Proud of you, baby."

## 4. Chapter 4

### Summary for the Chapter:

A good old Christmas prompt in May. Your welcome

Richie hated Christmas. In all honesty, he'd never really celebrated it at all. His parents hadn't ever bothered with the whole Santa shebang, and his Mom usually just used the festive period as an excuse to get even more blitzed on seasonal drinks. So, for as long as he could remember, his Christmas had consisted of rolling out of bed at around midday, being handed a couple of dollars if his Dad was there and had happened to remember his existence and, more recently, locking himself outside to smoke the day away, often with Bev.

This year was different though. For one, Bev had fucked off go live with her Aunt, leaving Derry for good. So his festive smoking pal had left him to fill his lungs with smoke all on his lonesome. But the other thing that was different was that he had a new ally to hate Christmas alongside him. New-to-town Will Byers, the latest member of the Losers Club and all around sweetheart, shared Richie's complete and utter distaste for the festive season. The winter months were hard for Will, Richie had discovered as they grew closer. Will had "died" in December, then come back to life- the infamous Zombie boy. He'd been possessed again in late Autumn, too. All in all, the last part of the year tended to made Will understandably miserable. Richie could relate.

It should've made Richie feel better, knowing that his friend didn't enjoy Christmas and wouldn't expect him to be festive or jolly. But it made him feel worse, watching Will's eyes become so much sadder and guarded. His face went pale just from looking at Christmas lights, for fucks sake. So, Richie had made a vow to give Will the best Christmas that he could conjure up.

He started with the small things, in early December. He'd sidled up to Will at the lockers, leaning casually against them, trying to ignore the pounding of his heart.

“Hey, William, want to see the school Christmas play?” He’d said with an ounce more sincerity than usual. “It’s probably shitty, but I bet it’s hilarious.” Will had glanced down at the two tickets Richie had presented him with and nodded with a shy smile.

“It’s a date!” Richie had grinned, before he could stop himself, and the pair of them had then both frozen. Will had blushed right to the roots of his hair and then smiled again, softly.

“A date. I’d like that.”

(The play as was cheesy and as ridiculous as predicted but Richie didn’t really remember, because he’d held Will Byers’ hand the whole time)

So. Christmas had gifted him a boyfriend. That was pretty...festive, he supposed.

After that, Richie found it quite easy to embrace one particular festive tradition: Mistletoe. Mistletoe, he’d discovered, was an absolutely genius invention. He followed Will everywhere, after their date, pouncing on him after his classes with the plant held aloft, demanding kisses. At school, Will rolled his eyes, permitting kisses on the cheek before pushing Richie away, giggling. Undeterred, Richie hung mistletoe all over his own house, and then proceeded to sneak it into the Byers home. His favourite piece hung above Will’s bed and he used the mistletoe as an excuse for as many make out sessions as possible. He turned up on Will’s doorstep with what was basically a bouquet of the stuff, and in the comfort of his own home Will was more than happy to drag Richie in by the collar of his ridiculous Hawaiian shirts and kiss him for far longer than mistletoe etiquette indicated. One time, Joyce opened the door to the Richie-and-mistletoe extravaganza and he’d kissed her on the cheek, delightedly, before cackling and bounding over to Will.

“Will!” Richie said, excitedly. “I kissed your mom under the mistletoe!”

Another Christmas tradition that Richie excelled at was gift giving. He’d never really gotten many gifts himself, but Richie had been working at the Aladin since he was 14 and loved to give his friends

presents when December rolled around. Will was no exception to this rule. Will hated receiving gifts normally, because he felt so guilty at not being able to afford good gifts in return. But Richie was different, somehow. He was so completely generous and used his money on each and every one of his friends.

So Will accepted each gift with good grace, and glowed with happiness when Richie bought him a beautiful set of paints, a pair of soft mittens, his favourite chocolates. They shared the chocolates over a Christmas movie and the paints were immediately put to good use: Will painted Richie, his favourite thing to look at he joked. The mittens, however, were a lost cause. Will's hands felt much warmer in Richie's large, clammy ones. Who needed mittens when he could twine his fingers through Richie's, and watch through his lashes when Richie cradled them to his chest, and blew hot air on them to keep them warm. Will's favourite gift, though he refused to admit it, was an old Christmas sweater that Richie had donated to him. It hung nearly to his knees, was a horrible garish red colour and Will had to roll the sleeves back twice before he could use his hands. He loved it.

Will cottoned on to what Richie was trying to do by the time mid December rolled around. He'd been serenaded, stalked with mistletoe, showered with gifts and had been dragged into decorating Richie's house top to bottom. Something in Will's heart warmed and he felt helplessly in love with his lanky, excitable, loudmouthed boyfriend. He didn't confront Richie about it, and instead chose to return the favour, offering him an invite to the Byers for Christmas Day, which Richie accepted without hesitation. ("Spending a day with the beautiful Mrs. B? How could ol' Richie here resist?"). As Richie was proving, Christmas was much better when spent together.

It was Christmas Eve, and The Losers were gathered at Richie's predictably parent-less house. This year, however, paper chains were strung everywhere, courtesy of Will, and mistletoe was in every corner, courtesy of Richie. There was a Christmas tree, albeit small and a little dilapidated, heaving with baubles and tinsel and drawings that Will had done of all the losers.

They were all a little tipsy, but mostly giddy and drunk on happiness, as cheesy as it sounded. Will had called all of his friends from Hawkins for an hour before arriving, and his head was full of

comfortingly familiar stories of the Party's adventures. The Loser's had also attempted to go carol singing, but Richie's tendency to sing deliberately wrong, dirty lyrics combined with the fact that Eddie, bless him, sang like a dying cat, meant that a lot of doors were slammed in their faces. And now he was in Richie's lap, before an actual crackling fire of all things (Mike had lit it and was keeping it burning), laughing at Eddie's attempt to act out a charades card to the group. His actions grew increasingly more dramatic and frantic as the Losers yelled guesses at him.

"Oh! Oh! It's a giraffe!" Richie said, completely inanely. Will dissolved into giggles, burying his head in Richie's chest. And all the Losers groaned.

"Stop encouraging him to make jokes!" Stan complained and Will bit his lip, but couldn't help the bubble of laughter that spilled out his mouth. Richie grinned up at them all and hugged Will to him tighter. They'd all pulled crackers earlier, and the paper hat Richie was wearing had slipped slightly so it tilted at a funny angle. Will couldn't understand how this just only made him more endearing.

"See?" Richie said, proudly gesturing to the laughing Will in his lap. "I'm hilarious. Will loves my jokes."

Will smiled and looked around at the fairy lights strung around the room, that he didn't flinch at, because he was safe in Richie's arms.

"I love you." Will corrected, pressing a kiss to the corner of Richie's mouth. There was a small pause, Christmas music from the radio played softly in the background as the Losers and Richie stared. Richie turned crimson and seemed completely and utterly stunned into silence. Then he took a deep, shuddering breath and pulled Will in impossibly close, staring at him in awe.

"This is the best Christmas ever!" He said, excitedly. "Holy shit. Holyyyyyy shit!" He seemed breathless and all the Losers smothered smiles and tactfully excused themselves to get more drinks or hurriedly resumed their conversations. Richie took no notice.

"I love you, baby. So much." Richie said softly, into Will's hair. "Merry Christmas."



**Author's Note:**

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